

ABSTRACT

The present invention provides new and useful devices and techniques for use in suturing. These devices and techniques are particularly useful in laparoscopic, arthroscopic, and/or open surgical procedures. A method according to the present invention is characterized by releasably coupling a suture to a suture device, causing the tip of the suture device and a portion of the suture to penetrate a tissue, and releasing the suture from the suture device, so the suture may be drawn through the tissue for completion of a suturing procedure. One type of suturing device according to the invention is characterized by a handle with an elongated shaft with a sharpened tip configured to hold a suture at a selected point on the suture. Another type of device according to the principles of the invention is characterized by new and useful structures and techniques for loading the suture into the device. According to still another aspect of the present invention, different shaped suture tips are provided for the selection of the most effective tip shape for a given application. A suturing device according to the present invention may also be configured for use with a needle point swedged to a suture. Yet another type of suturing device according to the principles of present invention includes a tissue support structure disposed adjacent the sharpened tip, which may move relative to the sharpened tip to facilitate penetration of the tip through a tissue.